

Message Text

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41

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15 IO-13

AID-20 PC-04 OMB-01 RSR-01 CU-04 OPR-02 SY-10 /136 W

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R 301500Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5869

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 8792

FOL CALCUTTA TEL RPTD FYI QUOTE

O R 271135Z JUL 73

FM AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

TO RUSBAE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 8363

INFO RUSBAY/AMCONSUL BOMBAY 1701

RUSBAS/AMCONSUL MADRAS 1645

C O N F I D E N T I A L CALCUTTA 1402

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, IN

SUBJ: BANGLA BANDH: A FLOP?

REF: CALCUTTA 1358

1. BY LATE AFTERNOON JULY 27 IT APPEARS THAT THE DETERMINED ATTITUDE OF THE CONGRESS MINISTRY TO CARRY ON BUSINESS AS USUAL IN THE FACE OF A CPI- AND CPI(M)-SPONSORED BANGLA BANDH HAS SUCCEEDED. ALTHOUGH THE AMOUNT OF BUSINESS, BOTH GOVERNMENTAL AND COMMERCIAL, CONDUCTED IS PROBABLY NEGLIGIBLE, THE RAY MINISTRY HAS MANAGED TO IMPLEMENT ITS PLEDGE TO KEEP THE COMPLEX TRANSPORTATION NETWORK IN THIS STATE FUNCTIONING. IN CALCUTTA IT SUCCEEDED WITH A VENGEANCE: MORE BUSSES WERE ON THE ROAD THAN USUAL, TRAINS FUNCTIONED MORE OR LESS REGULARLY; TRAMS, TAXIS AND PRIVATE CARS
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WERE NOT MUCH IN VIEW IN THE MORNING HOURS ALTHOUGH BY MID-

AFTERNOON THEY TOO ARE REAPPEARING. MANY SHOPS REMAINED CLOSED ALL DAY BUT MOST OFFICES WERE AT LEAST TECHNICALLY OPEN.

2. BASED ON THE LIMITED INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO US, THERE HAS NOT BEEN MAJOR BLOODSHED, ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN LOCALIZED CLASHES. POLICE AND ROVING YOUTH CONGRESS BANDS APPEAR TO HAVE ROUTED THE CPI(M) WHEREVER IT APPEARED AND THE CPI SEEMS NOT TO HAVE BEEN MUCH IN EVIDENCE. APPARENTLY THE GOWB DID NOT CALL UPON SERVICES OF EITHER CRP OR ARMY. RUMORS ARE FLYING, OF COURSE, BUT WE ARE REASONABLY SURE THAT SOME PROMINENT CPI MLAS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED AND SOME THOUSANDS OF CPI(M) WORKERS/STUDENTS WERE ROUNDED UP BOTH YESTERDAY AND IN THE EARLY MORNING TODAY. IT IS CLEAR THAT THIS SUCCESS OF THE CONGRESS GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN A TREMENDOUS BOOST TO THE PARTY IN THIS STATE. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CPI AND CPI(M) ARE MANY, BUT WE WILL HAVE TO WAIT FOR THESE TO UNFOLD. CPI(M) MAY HAVE SUCCEEDED IN MANEUVERING AN END TO THE PDA AND PUSHING CPI TO THE LEFT, IN OPPOSITION TO CONGRESS.

3. ACCORDING TO LOCAL OBSERVERS NEVER HAS A BANDH FLOPPED SO BADLY IN WEST BENGAL. IT APPEARS TO BE AN UNPRECEDENTED REJECTION OF VIOLENCE AND NEGATIVISM BY THE BANGALI POPULATION. AS FAR AS WE AWARE WE WERE ONLY CONSULATE TO REMAIN OPEN TODAY, ALTHOUGH WE DID CLOSE USIS AND AUC (AS PER STRATEGY OUTLINED CALCUTTA 1383).PICKERING

UNQUOTE
MOYNIHAN

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